

REMARKS

The present Amendment amends claims 2-9 and 11-18 and cancels claims 1 and 10. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 2-9 and 11-18.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's indication in paragraph 6 of the Office Action that claims 5 and 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Amendments were made to claims 5 and 14 to place them in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, claims 5 and 14 are allowable as indicated by the Examiner.

Amendments were made to the remaining claims so that they now depend from claims 5 and 14. Particularly, claims 2-4 and 6-9 were amended to depend from claim 5 and claims 11-13 and 15-18 were amended to depend from claim 14. Therefore, claims 2-4, 6-9, 11-13 and 15-18 are all allowable being that they now depend from an allowable base claim.

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Ma (U.S. Patent No. 5,953,338); claims 1-4, 6, 9, 11-13, 15 and 18 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ma and claims 7, 8, 16 and 17 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ma in view of Umehira (U.S. Patent No. 6,188,697). As indicated above, claims 1 and 10 were canceled. Therefore, these rejections with respect to claims 1 and 10 is rendered moot.

It should be noted that the cancellation of claims 1 and 10 was not intended nor should it be considered as an agreement on Applicants part that

the features recited in claims 1-10 are taught or suggested by any of the references of record particularly Ma and Umehira. The cancellation of claims 1 and 10 was simply intended to expedite prosecution of the present application.

As noted above, claims 2-4, 6-9, 11-13 and 15-18 were each amended so as to dependent upon an allowable base claim, namely claims 5 and 14. Thus, the above described rejections of claims 2-4, 6-9, 11-13 and 15-18 are rendered moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and the rejections of claims 2-4, 6-9, 11-13 and 15-18 under 35 USC §102(b) and 35 USC §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants submit that claims 2-9 and 11-18 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of claims 2-9 and 11-18 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C., Deposit Account No. 50-1417 (572.39563X00).

Respectfully submitted,

MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C.



Carl I. Brundidge
Registration No. 29,621

CIB/jdc
(703) 684-1120